GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:213
ANSWERED ON:17.03.2005
DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES TO SECURE OIL AND GAS
Rao Shri Devarakonda Vittal

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has started diplomatic initiatives to secure oil and gas from Gulf, Russia and Africa as reported in the Indian Express dated January 20, 2005;

(b) if so, whether the Government has held talks with the oil providing countries in this regard; and

(c) if so, the outcome thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS AND PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a) to (c) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (c) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 213 BY SHRI D. VITTAL RAO TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 17TH MARCH 2005 REGARDING DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES TO SECURE OIL AND GAS

(a) : Given the increasing gap between demand and domestic availability of crude oil, besides taking appropriate measures to accelerate exploratory activities for enhancing domestic oil and gas production, it has become essential for our energy security to step up efforts overseas in search of equity oil and supplementary sources of oil and gas.

Towards this end, and in keeping with the objectives of the Energy Security section of the National Common Minimum Programme, ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL), as well as other national oil companies such as IOC, OIL and GAIL, have been pursuing the acquisition of equity oil abroad, as well as the acquisition abroad of oil and gas exploration acreages and producing properties. These companies have Participating Interests in oil and gas projects located in Vietnam, Sudan, Russia, Iraq, Iran, Myanmar, Libya, Syria, Australia, Ivory Coast, Qatar and Egypt.

OVL, in association with other oil sector PSUs, is aggressively scouting for E&P opportunities in countries such as Venezuela, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Yemen, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Angola, Cuba, Sierra Leone and Ecuador in addition to efforts to acquire more E&P assets in the countries where it is operating currently.

For extending guidance and advice to the Indian oil companies in their efforts to acquire equity oil abroad, Government have constituted an Advisory Committee on Oil Diplomacy for Energy Security comprising experts with specialized knowledge of the countries and regions with whom the oil companies are expected to interact.

(b) & (c) : Discussions about possible areas of collaboration between India and Russia have been held at ministerial, official and commercial levels, and the progress has been encouraging.

Besides, negotiations have been opened with Iran for the supply of natural gas by pipeline through Pakistan. A trilateral Ministerial meeting in Yangon in January, 2005 agreed in principle on the import of gas from Myanmar to India through Bangladesh.